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BM reality check after rising electrocution incidents finds ground situation in city shocking beyond imagination

HARDWIRED

Electric wires protruding without insulation posing danger

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"It may not cost more to the BBMP either to insulate electric wires or provide covers to the termination boxes
— Murgesh N, pedestrian.

It is quite disgusting and shocking, the apathy and perfunctory attitude of Bengaluru Electricity Supply Company (Bescom) and Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) towards the maintenance of electric poles and street light poles across the city.

Despite electrocution incidents taking place at frequent intervals, the Bescom continues to be negligent to maintain the electric poles in the city. Dangling electric wires and electric poles with electric wires hanging, wide open termination boxes or junction boxes around them are a common sight at some of the locations, especially in newly developed areas and slums.

One can find more than eight to 10 electric wires or electric cables at the termination point of an electric pole, posing danger to the pedestrians or the people residing in the buildings adjacent to such electric poles.

"I want Bescom to develop a special app to enable the public to inform them by uploading photos of dangling electric wires on the app. It will help the Bescom staff to fix the problem without causing inconvenience or danger to unwary pedestrians," said Yatish M, a resident from Jayanagar.

A transformer blast on Church Street claimed the life

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 »

215 junior health inspectors await 6 months' wages

BBMP had promised to pay salaries of junior health inspectors by Monday

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For the past six months, no wages have been paid to junior health inspectors (JHIs) working for the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike's solid waste management department. BBMP cited issues with the tendering process of the outsourcing agency and promised to clear the salaries of the health inspectors by Monday.

Nearly 215 junior health inspectors working at the SWM department overseeing the work of pourakarmikas, door-to-door collection of waste and clearing black spots, haven't been paid for the past six months. JHIs complained they are struggling to make ends meet due to pending salaries since February.

"Our salaries have been pending for the past six months. We are issued a salary of Rs 24,500 per month and now we are struggling. Having been educated within the same field, we can't even take up other jobs. Without no regular income, we cannot take loans either," said Aakash*, a JHI at the BBMP SWM department.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 »

Wheels of glory

Cantonment Railway Station marks 153 years since its establishment; expert says it occupies significant position in history of Bengaluru

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Station Mahotsav organised at Cantonment Railway Station on Monday

"Cantonment Railway Station became a part of South Western Railway with the inception of the new railway zone in 2003
–Kusuma Hariprasad

Did you know that the Cantonment Railway Station boasts a rich history spanning around 153 years? It has been more than a century and a half since the inaugural train whistle echoed in Bengaluru. On August 1, 1864, a steam engine locomotive made its journey from Bengaluru Cantonment Railway Station to Jolarpettai in the Vellore district of Tamil Nadu, marking a momentous occasion that ushered progress into the region.

Kusuma Hariprasad, Additional Divisional Railway Manager (Admin), shared that the railways are organising Station Mahotsav Functions at major railway stations to enlighten people about the history and development of railway stations and their significance in our movement. Tracing the history of Cantonment Railway Station, she highlighted that the station was visited by Sharada Matha and former President Rajendra Prasad. She also mentioned that Mahatma Gandhi addressed a massive gathering near this station in 1920. Various historical developments related to Bengaluru Cantonment Railway Station were shared with the audience.

She stated, "The city's first train, appropriately named Bengaluru Mail, was operated by Madras Railway Company, one of the companies incorporated to develop a railway network in British India. The train covered a stretch of 149 km. In 1882, Bengaluru was connected to the Mysuru line through a metre-gauge line by the Mysore State Railway. In the same year, the Madras Railway Company linked Bengaluru Cantonment Station to Bengaluru City Station, from where lines were laid towards Guntakal, Mysuru, and Tumakuru. Bangalore Cantonment came under the control of the government in 1944, when it took over all company railways."

The station became a part of the Southern Railway Zone on April 14, 1951, during the post-independence period, she added.

The first President of India, Dr Babu Rajendra Prasad, visited Bengaluru Cantonment Railway Station on June 14, 1959. The section between Jolarpettai and Bengaluru City, inclusive of Bengaluru Cantonment, was fully electrified on March 11, 1991, and the first train services on the electrified line commenced on March 29, 1992. The doubling of this section (with patch doubling) was done between 1977 and 2004.

"Bengaluru Cantonment Railway Station became a part of South Western Railway with the inception of the new railway zone on April 1, 2003. On February 19, 2005, Bengaluru Cantonment became the first railway station in South Western Railway with an interlocking signalling system to control train operations," she explained.

Historically, Bengaluru Cantonment was one of the stations where Neal's ball-token signalling system of interlocking was introduced in 1940 for smooth train operations. Today, the station witnesses over 20,000 passenger footfalls per day, with daily average earnings of Rs 7,40,000. Handling 25 pairs of express and 16 pairs of passenger trains, this iconic station is undergoing development into a world-class building at a cost of Rs 480 crore.

Fatty liver disease cases on the rise

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Poor diet choice is one of the contributing factors

Health professionals have been seeing a rise in the prevalence of fatty liver disease among paediatric patients lately. A major contributing factor to the spike in fatty liver disease is primarily lifestyle habits such as poor diet choices, sedentary behaviour, and obesity. These cases, if left untreated, could lead to liver complications.

In one of the case studies, an eight-year-old child presented with abdominal pain at Athreya Hospital. With a weight of 42 kg, well above the ideal range of 25–26 kg, the child was diagnosed with fatty liver disease after an abdominal ultrasound. An investigation revealed a diet low in home-cooked food but high in junk food consumption. Recognising the early stage of non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), experts prescribed increased physical activity and initiated physiotherapy. The holistic approach aims to manage the condition. With ongoing treatment, the child is undergoing positive progress, highlighting the crucial role of lifestyle modifications in combating paediatric NAFLD.

In another case, a 10-year-old presented with abdominal pain, weighing 53.5 kg, signalling overweight status. Incidentally diagnosed with fatty liver disease through increased liver enzyme activity on an abdominal ultrasound, the child's diet predominantly consisted of junk food, coupled with a sedentary lifestyle.

Dr Narayanaswamy, renowned paediatrician and founder and medical director of Athreya Hospital, said, "The rise of NAFLD is deeply intertwined with contemporary lifestyle habits, notably poor dietary choices, sedentary behaviour, and the escalating rates of childhood obesity. Diets high in sugar, unhealthy fats, and processed foods have become commonplace, contributing significantly to the accumulation of fat in the liver, a hallmark of NAFLD."

The confluence of these factors is alarming, as it's increasingly observed even in younger individuals.

Children with NAFLD are at an increased risk of developing cardiovascular diseases, emphasising the systemic impact of this condition, he explained.

Furthermore, Dr Sasidhar Reddy Pothula, a paediatrician at Asha Hospital, pointed out that patients with truncal obesity or type 2 diabetes should remain vigilant due to their heightened susceptibility.

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2 THINGS TO DO

01 Musical match

Get ready to enjoy the latest edition of the Whitefield Music Festival, where 18 renowned artists from across the country are set to perform, engage, and entertain over the two days. The first day will feature Manipuri and Odissi jugalbandi by Vidushi Bimbavati and Vidushi Madhulita Mohapatra, and more. There will also be a Carnatic vocal recital by Vidushi Ranjani-Gayatri.

Where: Inner Circle Ground, Whitefield
When: November 25 and 26; contact: 9606444452

02 Art and the artist

Renowned artist and creative producer RB Murari is set to take Bengaluru's art lovers on an emotional exploration through his art. Based in Chennai, he is known for his abstract art and has been practicing it for over three decades now. His exhibition, Emotive Resonance, will project a range of non-objective abstract artwork.

Where: MKF Museum of Art, 55-1 Isha Villa, opp SodaBottleOpenerWala, Lavelle Road
When: November 25 to December 10; 11 am to 6:30 pm (Mondays closed)

On the chopping block, B'luru's green cover

Hundreds of trees soon to make way for various projects such as construction of railway quarters, infra work

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According to multiple public notices and orders by the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), hundreds of trees in the city are yet again in the line of fire, either already permitted to be cut/transplanted or facing such an imminent threat.

Trees identified to face the axe soon are for various projects such as construction of railway quarters and infrastructure projects like installation of sanitary pipelines.

The Rail Land Development Authority (RLDA) had sought permission for the clearance of a few trees standing in the MG Railway Colony area for the construction of railway quarters a couple of months ago. A public notice regarding the same was put up by BBMP, following which a field forest officer conducted a spot inspection.

Based on the inspection and the tree expert committee (TEC)'s observation, permission has now been granted to cut and translocate 130 trees. Of these, while 49 trees will be moved to other areas, 81 will face the axe. In most of the cases, the base of the tree was found to be infringed by concrete instruction and thus trees were found unsuitable for translocation.

Apart from that, permission to cut 81 trees standing in the offshore areas of Kaikondrahalli and Kasavanahalli Lake has been sought by Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board through a public notice. BWSSB needs this clearance for installation of sanitary pipelines in the area.

In yet another public notice by Gandhi Krushi Vignana Kendra (GKVK), permission has been sought to cut 500 acacia trees for the establishment of progeny orchards and frontline demonstration of high-yielding varieties and hybrids of cashews.

Green going

City-based tree activists and environmentalists say while the green cover is being hacked at a rate never before, ghost compensatory plantation activities are becoming the order of the day.

According to Vijay Nishant, a member of the Bengaluru's Biodiversity Management Committee and founder of Project Vruksha, while 50-odd trees were cut from Jayamahal Road a year ago, there is no clarity on compensatory plantation.

"When trees on Jayamahal Road were cut for a road widening project, we reached out to the BBMP and apprised that plantation must happen either in the same place or nearby areas. However, that is yet to take place. While we are chopping the green cover in the city, plantations are happening elsewhere.

That will not provide the desirable results either ecologically or microclimate-wise. Similarly, there was no public consultation held for the 67 trees proposed to be removed for the Ejipura flyover project.

Such haphazard planning and lack of will to implement the rules in true spirit will prove to be costly," said Nishant.

No objections

Experts also highlight the lack of public objections in response to the notices. In response to public notice by BBMP for the RLDA project, no objections were received. They opine that BBMP must make an effort to circulate these notices to the wider public.

"Unless efforts are made to obtain public objections, this exercise will prove futile. BBMP has been doing it mechanically but it must get innovative in its approach to ensure the rules are followed in true spirit. Lack of objections implies that people are not looking at or missing these public notices currently being printed in newspapers.

The DCF should look at the wide circulation through BBMP's social media sites. Although there is no such provision in the KPT Act, considering that very few objections are being received, such methods can and should be explored now," said Dattatreya Devare, trustee, Bangalore Environment Trust.

Robber barges in, knifes woman

An elderly woman was attacked by a chain snatcher brandishing a knife, seriously injuring her, on Monday morning at Anekal on the outskirts of the city. The elderly woman was at home with her husband when the chain snatcher broke in at 8:30 am. The victim has been identified as Akkayamma.

The chain-snatcher waved a knife at the woman and demanded that she give her husband the jewellery she was wearing. The woman cried out for assistance, but the chain snatcher stabbed her in the neck with the knife.

The woman was taken in an ambulance to a private hospital nearby. Police later visited the house with sniffer dogs, and filed a case. After finding out that the victim and her partner lived alone in the house, the chain snatcher had allegedly plotted to rob them when they paid her a visit four days ago in the guise of inquiring about the address of a house in the vicinity. **BMB**

Child who fell into sambar vessel dies

A class II student succumbed to her burn injuries at a Bengaluru hospital, three days after she accidentally fell into a hot 'sambar' vessel at a government school in Afzalpur taluk of Kalaburagi, police said on Monday.

Seven-year-old Mahanthamma Shivappa Talawar was severely injured on November 16 after the tragic incident at the midday meal kitchen attached to the school, they said.

Two school staff members and the chief cook of the midday meal scheme in the school were suspended following the incident, police said.

The child sustained 40 per cent burn injuries and was immediately rushed to a primary health centre at Choudapur where she was given first aid and later shifted to another hospital in the district for further treatment, a senior police officer said.

As her condition deteriorated, she was shifted to Victoria hospital in Bengaluru where she succumbed to injuries, he said. Based on the complaint from the victim's mother, a case of death due to negligence has been registered under section 304 A of the IPC, but no arrests have been made so far, he added. **PTI**

BMRCL fishes out an able cable plan

Spare optical fiber network to be leased out to interested firms with drop facility

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The Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation (BMRCL) is planning to lease out its spare optical fibre network to agencies. BMRCL has an estimated 791 km of spare optical fibre cables (OFC) within its network and a drop facility at 11 sections.

This comes as a novel method to sort out the city's OFC mess and create an additional source of non-fare revenue for BMRCL. Interested agencies have been invited to lease spare optical fibres available within the BMRCL network.

Additionally, agencies will have drop facilities at multiple metro stations located within 11 sections of the metro network.

BMRCL wants to push its extensive OFC network along the Metro route as the most sought-after location for the use of OFCs, which is in line with Telecom Policy.

Telecom companies and other interested parties who want to expand their business can avail of the spare cables.

If successful, this may sort out the city's infernal OFC mess

BMRCL may also provide space for the installation of equipment, power supply and necessary accessories as per the requirement of the Licensee and the availability and feasibility of space at stations. The tender for licensing has been called for both Phase 1 and 2 of BMRCL. The licensing will be awarded to the bidder for five years.

The 11 identified sections are Baiyappanahalli to MG Road, Magadi Road to Mysore Road, Nagasandra to Mantri Square Sampige Road, National College to Yelachenahalli, MG Road to Magadi Road, Mantri Square Sampige Road to National College, Baiyappanahalli to Whitefield, Mysore Road to Challaghatta, Nagasandra to BIEC, Yelachanahalli to Silk Institute, and RV Road to Bommasandra.

In February 2023, Railtel, a Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) under the Ministry of Railways, got the order from BMRCL for revamping IT infrastructure at 51 stations and two depots at the cost of Rs 56.17 crore.

A new green oasis under consideration

Hope blooms for Bengaluru as a proposal for 150-acre park near Yelahanka gains traction

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Cubbon Park serves as the primary lung space and a major attraction in Bengaluru. There have been long-standing plans to construct similar parks across the city, although none of them have materialised. However, now there is a new spark of hope with a new proposal for a 150-acre park near Yelahanka.

Sources reveal that both the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) and the forest department are collaborating on this project under the Brand Bengaluru initiative. The proposal is currently under consideration, awaiting approval from Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar. An official, while expressing concern about the depleting greenery in the city where lush green areas are transforming into concrete jungles, said that not everyone can afford to visit Cubbon Park or Lalbagh daily. Hence, the plan to establish a 150-acre park near Yelahanka was laid out. The official also highlighted a shift in focus towards planting more fruit-bearing and medicinal plants rather than conventional species. "Brand Bengaluru, conceptualised by DK Shivakumar, encompasses various sectors such as health, education, transport, infrastructure, and more. Within the forest wing, the plan includes the construction of a park," the official added.

The official further said that potential land in Yelahanka, Mahadevapura, KR Puram, and Bommanahalli is being scouted for the project. Approximately 150 acres of land, partly belonging to the revenue department and the forest department, have been identified. "Pending approval, the park construction will proceed. The plan is to construct parks on the lines of Cubbon Park or Lalbagh. Land near Yelahanka has been identified, and with permission from the deputy CM, we will proceed with the new park," the official said.

Parks in the heart of the city act as vital oases, nurturing both nature and the human spirit

> **"Pending approval, the park construction will proceed. The plan is to construct parks on the lines of Cubbon Park or Lalbagh. Land near Yelahanka has been identified, and with permission from the deputy CM, we will proceed with the new park** –BBMP official

Simultaneously, BBMP officials outlined their commitment to planting more medicinal plants in existing parks. Previously focusing on the Indian Beech Tree (Honge) and neem plants, they now aim to increase the presence of fruit-bearing trees, benefiting both birds and the environment. Nurseries have been instructed to procure more such plants for park usage.

Reacting to the proposal to build new parks, Anita Chandrashekar, a resident of Yelahanka, said, "The idea of a new park is fantastic as it provides more recreational space for the public. The city needs more green spaces, and a new park near Yelahanka would be a welcome addition, enhancing the quality of life for residents. Parks play a crucial role in maintaining ecological balance, and I look forward to the positive impact this new park could have on our environment."

Kammanahalli skywalk in shambles

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Residents of Kammanahalli have highlighted the deplorable conditions of the skywalk in the area. The roof of the skywalk has been severely damaged, making it impossible for commuters to navigate the stretch during rain, and the pathway is littered with garbage on either side. The railings of the skywalk have also been used to hang cable wires.

After the issue was aggravated, the Banaswadi Traffic Police said they had informed the concerned Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) officials to carry out necessary repair work.

A frequent user of the skywalk said that during monsoon, pedestrians are forced to use the road as the skywalk lacks adequate shelter. "The situation is very dangerous for pedestrians as they are required to use the dangerous road to cross. On the other hand, pedestrians not using the shelter also hampers the smooth movement of vehicles and makes it harder for motorists to navigate their way," he said.

Cable wires drape neglected skywalk

Other residents held skywalk users accountable for the accumulation of garbage. "While the BBMP is responsible for ensuring that any accumulated garbage is cleared out from the spot, we must also question why it has been collected on the skywalk in the first place. Skywalk users must ensure that they do not litter the space or misuse it in any other way," a resident said while urging the BBMP to designate a space for garbage bins in the design of skywalks. "The BBMP must conduct strict inspections on both users and the contractors responsible for maintenance," she said.

> **"While the BBMP is responsible for ensuring that any accumulated garbage is cleared out from the spot, we must also question why it has been collected on the skywalk in the first place** –A resident of Kammanahalli

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Obstructive stall
Richmond Road

An area near a mosque faces challenges due to an obstructive fast-food stall, leading to disruptions for pedestrians and traffic. Locals seek resolution.

Garbage grove
Central Business District

Residency Road, near KPTCL, deals with broken cable slabs filled with garbage and demands urgent action for aesthetic restoration and cleanliness.

Cleanup call
Sajjan Rao Circle

Sajjan Rao Circle contends with indiscriminate trash, demanding prompt attention for cleanup and public awareness campaigns.

CPR for babies: Traffic cops get hands-on training

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The Bengaluru traffic police personnel in the south division received training in giving Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) to infants in emergency situations, on Monday.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (traffic), South, Shiva Prakash Devaraju, said that the traffic police officials in his division were given training in a three-hour workshop for basic first aid and CPR.

"In accident situations or any emergency situations, it is important to have knowledge about CPR and first aid. Sometimes, we don't know how to deal with infants and children in such situations, so this workshop is useful," said Devaraju.

He added that in some recent accident cases, children were the victims.

"We had CPR training for adults recently, so I was talking to some doctors about having it for children. We approached Rainbow Hospital and they came forward to help out," he added.

This move has been appreciated by the citizens, who said that the knowledge of CPR and basic first aid is an essential life skill for people from all walks of life.

"It is an absolute necessity for policemen as well. The training should be extended to other divisions as well. Along with this, it will be beneficial if policemen are trained to give first aid in cases of fire and electrical accidents - especially after the recent mishaps in the city," said Sanjeev, a citizen.

Traffic expert MN Sreehari also said that it is important that not only traffic policemen, but even law and order police personnels are given this training.

"It should be done in all jurisdictions. Also, these trainings help traffic constables and wardens to learn techniques that can be helpful in an emergency. A DCP or a Joint CP can't possibly be at every location all the time, so training personnel at all levels is beneficial. So many accidents take place in the city, if the police officials on the road know how and what to do for immediate help, many lives can be saved," he said.

'Have no info': RTI activists not impressed with answer

Feeling of being stone-walled at Chief Secy's office; applications not being transferred to dept concerned

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If the complaints and allegations from Right To Information (RTI) activists are anything to go by, it seems the State Government is averse to implementing the RTI Act effectively in the state. The activists have spoken up about the 'reluctance' among staff working at the State Chief Secretary's office to provide information sought as per the TI Act.

"I had sought information on the number of medical colleges, seats, and the number of inspections conducted, and other issues, but the Under Secretary and Information Officer of the Chief Secretary's office declined to provide information, stating that no data is available with them," said KA Paul of Citizen Rights Foundation.

No direction

Paul said that it is the responsibility of the Information Officer at the Chief Secretary's office to transfer an application to the department concerned if the data or information is not available with them.

Section 6(3) of the RTI Act provides that where an application is made to a public authority requesting any information held by another public authority or the subject matter which is more closely connected with the functions of another public authority, the public authority to which such application is made shall transfer the application to that other public authority.

"The Information Officer at the Chief Secretary's office has advised me to seek the data with the department concerned. The Information Officer has also advised me to appeal. Where is the question of going on an appeal if the information is not available with the Chief Secretary's office? It is the responsibility of the Information Officer or the Chief Secretary to transfer my application to the department concerned that can provide information on my application. I paid Rs 10 Postal Order fee towards providing information. The Information Officer did not return the Postal Order," said Paul, adding that he wrote a letter to the Chief Minister as well as the Chief Secretary on this issue.

RTI activist says he paid Rs 10 postal order fee that was not returned

Meanwhile, Mahiti Hakku Adhyayana Kendra Trustee BH Veeresh wrote a letter to Karnataka Governor Thawar Chand Gehlot complaining against Information Commissioners for not ensuring the State Government officials upload information on their respective websites.

"As per the Supreme Court order, all government departments have to upload information on their websites as per Section 4 of the RTI Act. We sought information on the work orders issued by the Public Works Department (PWD). The PWD engineers neither uploaded the work orders on the website of the PWD nor provided information to RTI applications on the work orders," said Veeresh.

> **"As per the Supreme Court order, all govt departments have to upload information on their websites as per Section 4 of the RTI Act** –BH Veeresh, activist

Disseminate all material

As per Section 4 of the RTI Act, all materials shall be disseminated, taking into consideration the cost-effectiveness, local language, and the most effective method of communication in that local area, and the information should be easily accessible, to the extent possible in electronic format with the Central Public Information Officer or State Public Information Officer, as the case may be, available free or at such cost of the medium or the print cost price as may be prescribed.

"I have requested the Governor to intervene in this matter and advise all government departments to upload information on their respective websites for the benefit of the public," Veeresh said.

IN BRIEF

Counselling at police station goes awry

A 23-year-old man was arrested for allegedly attacking his wife with a knife inside a woman's police station in Hassandistrict headquarters town, where they had been called for marital counselling, police said on Monday.

Fed up of alleged "torture" and "ill-treatment" by her husband, the woman had approached the police and filed a complaint against him, who suspected her of having an extra marital affair, police said.

According to the police, on Sunday afternoon, the couple who had been married for over two years was called for counselling to the police station during which the man was questioned over his behaviour and his alleged ill-treatment of his wife.

The wife's accusations and refusal to go with him apparently angered the man to the extent that he took out a knife from his pocket, which he had brought from home, and attacked her inside the police station. **PTI**

2 arrested for leopard poaching

Two men were arrested for allegedly shooting dead a leopard, and the police recovered the remains of the big cat.

Two country-made pistols were also seized from the suspects -- Shantaraju and Arjun -- both residents of Doddainduvadi village, police said on Monday.

The arrests were made on Saturday morning by a team of police personnel from Kollegal rural police station.

Acting on a tip off, they waylaid them on a motorcycle near Chikkalluru. On checking, they were found two country-made pistols in their possession, a senior police officer said. During interrogation, the accused confessed to have killed a leopard four-five days ago and revealed the involvement of a third accomplice. **PTI**

It's high time

District Anganwadi workers held a protest at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on Monday. They demand vacant posts be filled, and helpers be regularised

Digging deep: Alarming drop in groundwater

Four taluks in city experience notable decline in groundwater levels; experts say that increase in impervious surfaces, attributed to rapid urbanisation, is reason behind depletion

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Groundwater levels in four out of five taluks in Bengaluru urban district have registered a significant drop compared to last year. According to the recent groundwater level fluctuation report by the Groundwater Directorate Bangalore, the groundwater table in Bengaluru South, Anekal, Bengaluru North, and Yelahanka taluks has receded a drop of more than 4 metre below ground level.

However, the four rural taluks fared better. Only one out of the four taluks (Anekal) recorded a drop of this magnitude in the water table. While the groundwater level in Hoskote has come up by 4 metre below ground level, in Doddaballapur and Devanahalli, the water table has improved by nearly 2 metre.

According to the report, the groundwater in most of the taluks is now available at 20–30 metre below ground level. In Bengaluru East and Anekal, it is reachable at 30–40 metre below ground level.

Experts say an increase in impervious surfaces due to rapid urbanisation might be the prime reason behind depleting groundwater levels in urban taluks. While lakes recharge groundwater, even this aspect is compromised due to the high built-up area around the water bodies.

"We are concretising more and more spaces in urban setups while over-extracting water from under the ground. Bengaluru North taluk, for instance, is bustling with construction activities utilising groundwater. Such human activities will deplete the groundwater table in the region. Since we are withdrawing more and recharging less, the balance is bound to drop gradually," said a city-based ecologist.

Experts point out that illegal PG buildings drill multiple borewells

The incessant digging of borewells, leading to overexploitation of the water table, further adds to the issue. Experts underline a spate of illegal borewell drilling, for instance, all over the Whitefield area over the past few years.

"As Bengaluru is a notified over-exploited zone, no permissions are given for commercial borewells, and it is difficult to get even domestic borewells. But borewell drilling was going on non-stop for years. The biggest culprits are illegal PG buildings. The typical modus operandi of these site owners is to drill multiple borewells without permission and then use the water for construction. Later, they use the borewells to meet the needs of hundreds of residents. As a consequence of the above theft and commercial exploitation, most public borewells and domestic borewells are now dry, and many areas are left without public water supply," said Sandeep Anirudhan of Namma Whitefield.

> **"As Bengaluru is a notified over-exploited zone, no permissions are given for commercial borewells. But borewell drilling was going on non-stop for years** –Sandeep Anirudhan

Furthermore, experts highlight water tanker businesses as other big violators. The endless extraction is drying up the groundwater table. So much so that ward committee meetings are overwhelmingly consumed by discussions on dry public borewells. "Layouts that are suffering are the White Rose Layout, Prashanth Layout, Upkar Layout, Pai Layout, and D Silva Layout. Moreover, owing to overexploitation, all surrounding layouts have also had their aquifers depleted, and their borewells have also dried up. Residents have started reporting borewell drilling in the ward committee group and have started exerting pressure on BWSSB and KGWA to stop them, but KGWA, in particular, has been very slow to act," added Anirudhan.

Next wave in human-robo interaction

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Researchers at the International Institute of Information Technology Bangalore (IIIT Bengaluru) have developed an interpretable and ready-to-use pipeline for modelling engagement in human-robot interactions. In addition to predicting engagement, the pipeline provides deeper insights into a person's personality, attitude, and emotions. This innovative approach incorporates the Big Five personality traits, the Interpersonal Circumplex (IPC), and the Triandis Theory of Interpersonal Behaviour (TIB).

This research was done by graduate students Soham Joshi and Arpitha Malavalli, under the supervision of Professor Shrisha Rao, all of IIIT Bengaluru. The research was just published in the Plos One journal of the Public Library of Science (PLOS).

Arpitha Malavalli, Department of Computer Science, IIIT Bengaluru, said, "In any situation where humans and robots interact, understanding how engaged the humans are is a key concern. We want to know if educational tools are holding students' interest, if elderly or impaired individuals are displaying confidence in assistive robots, if consumers are finding commercial chatbots satisfying, and more. When dealing with diverse engagement levels among people in a crowd, an interacting robot must adapt to each individual's needs."

Soham Joshi, Department of Computer Science, IIIT Bengaluru, added, "Many previous methods for predicting engaging behaviour rely on blindly training deep neural networks to understand the link between multimodal cues and engagement levels. However, this approach differs significantly from how humans assess engagement in their interactions. Humans consider various factors, like the personality, attitude, and emotion of the person they're interacting with. Our goal is to create a prediction pipeline for human-robot interactions that mimics this human-like assessment of engagement."

The very first step of the pipeline uses multimodal cues like head movements, hand gestures, eye movements, and physiological features to predict the big five personality traits of the human interacting with the robot.

Every human is graded on extraversion, agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism.

Shrisha Rao, professor at IIIT Bengaluru, the senior researcher on this study, said, "Engagement modelling has a wide range of applications in domains like online learning platforms, assistive robotics, and intelligent conversational agents, and our pipeline can be utilised in all such scenarios."

It's biz as usual for state's 1,695 unauthorised schools

Parents anxious as admission time nears and education dept fails to take decisive action

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Even though we are still in the middle of the academic year, many schools are already gearing up for admissions in the next academic year (2024–25). However, parents are still in the dark about which schools are 'unauthorised'. Currently, there are 1,695 unauthorised schools in the state that continue to function 'normally' as the education department has failed to take decisive action.

According to the data, there are a total of 72,744 schools in the state. Out of these, 47,487 are government schools, 6,501 are aided, 17,269 are private unaided, and the rest fall under the 'other' school categories. In private schools alone, a staggering 6,18,178 students are currently enrolled. Parents are questioning why, despite having 31 Deputy Directors of Public Instruction and 204 Block Education Officers responsible for providing approval and NOC to schools, unauthorised schools are still operational.

The education department had previously identified 1,695 unauthorised schools in the state.

There are a total of 72,744 schools in Karnataka

"Since July 2022, the department has been actively verifying whether these schools are functioning in accordance with the rules. In March of this year, the education department set a 45-day deadline for these unauthorised schools to regularise their status by following the rules. Only a few schools have adhered to the rules and undergone the regularisation process, while others have yet to comply," said a source.

The education department had given the authority to DDPI and BEO to derecognise schools that failed to regularise. However, sources reveal that DDPIs have issued notices but have not taken any further action. Not a single school has been derecognized since March, the source added.

Parents find themselves in a dilemma, fearing that if a school is derecognised in the middle of the academic year, students will have nowhere to go. "The education department should publish the list of authorised and unauthorised schools on their website. Unauthorised schools should be shut down and not allowed to function. The government should also ensure that students studying in unauthorised schools secure seats in other private, unaided schools, as finding an alternative seat can be a challenging task for the students," expressed Dhruv N, a concerned parent.

> **"In March this year, the education dept set a 45-day deadline for unauthorised schools to regularise their status** –Edn dept source

Kannada medium dip in Maharashtra

Meanwhile, Kannada-medium schools in neighbouring Maharashtra are experiencing a decline, primarily attributed to the lack of support from the Maharashtra government and indifference from the Karnataka government. Compounding the issue, there has been no recruitment of teachers for these schools in the past 13 years. Despite a growing number of students enrolling in Kannada-medium schools along the Maharashtra border, the teaching process is hindered by the severe shortage of teachers.

For instance, in Akkalkot, there are 103 Kannada-medium schools with 15,000 students but only 550 teachers. Jath has 125 schools with 13,000 students and 456 teachers, while in south Solapur, there are 25 schools with 2,000 students and 100 teachers. Jayasinghpur faces a dire situation with just two schools, 250 students, and just nine teachers. Miraj has four schools with 500 students but only 10 teachers. Sources hint at a need for at least 500 additional teachers.

Arrest and release on same day

The High Court of Karnataka on Monday directed the prison authorities in Chitradurga to immediately release Shivamurthy Sharana, the pontiff of the Chitradurga Murugharajendra Bruhan Math, who was arrested and sent to judicial custody earlier in the day.

A non-bailable warrant (NBW) was issued against the Seer earlier today by the Second Additional Sessions Judge BK Komala in Chitradurga, in the second Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act case against him.

He was arrested subsequently by the Chitradurga police from Virakta Math in Davangere, where he was staying after getting bail in the first POCSO case, and produced before the trial court in Chitradurga, which sent him to 14 days in judicial custody. The seer's advocate challenged this before the bench of Justice Suraj Govindaraj, in the evening.

The Court was informed that the Special Public Prosecutor (SPP) had filed a memo before the Trial Court seeking a NBW against the seer. The memo stated that there was no HC order allowing him to appear through video conferencing.

"You can't misinterpret the order of this Court just because it is a sensational case," Justice Govindaraj said while setting aside the NBW and directing the seer's release.

"It is rather surprising that the SPP is not aware of the order dated 8-11-23 of this Court. This court has categorically ordered accused number one (Seer) not to enter Chitradurga and attend court hearings by video conferencing," the HC said.

"...The petitioner has been restricted from entering into the said district and permitted to attend through video conferencing," the HC said. —PTI

BM Trippin' Tales

Winter break: Manali-Leh route shut

The Manali-Leh route is a favourite among bikers in the country, attracting hundreds of enthusiasts from Bengaluru every year. However, neither bikers nor any other tourists will be able to embark on this route for the next six months as it has been closed for the winter.

Danish D, a regular biker on this route, said, "For most of us, traveling from Manali to Leh and then to Srinagar is like an annual circuit. With the onset of winter, heavy snowfall in these areas necessitates the closure of the route. As a result, we need to prepare for next year's biking trail, which will kick off next summer."

Himachal Pradesh authorities said that considering the prevailing cold weather conditions and potential driving risks, the Manali-Leh National Highway will be closed from November 20 onwards. In accordance with orders from the Lahaul-Spiti and Ladakh administrations, the Darcha-Sarchu, Darcha-Shinku La, and Gramphu-Kaza

roads will also be closed starting Monday. The highway is expected to reopen around May next year, after approximately six months, when the snow on the road begins to melt. An official from the Lahaul administration emphasised that action would be taken against those who violate the orders and travel on this route during the closure period.

"Though the weather is clear these days, the decreasing temperature has led to ice formation on the road, posing a risk of accidents. The orders have been issued as a measure to prevent accidents," explained the official.

However, officials noted that vehicles will be allowed from Manali to Darcha as long as the weather permits.

Meanwhile, the Ladakh administration has instructed the local police department to strictly implement the closure orders and advised tourists to avoid traveling during this period. A separate order from the Union Territory of Ladakh highlighted the significant risk of vehicles getting stranded on the Manali-Leh route due to prevailing cold weather conditions and reports of ice on roads, especially at high mountain passes.

Consequently, it has been decided to close the Leh-Manali road to prevent travel disruptions and potential stranding of vehicles. Every year, hundreds of people who get stranded on the Manali-Leh route are rescued by teams from Lahaul-Spiti police and the Border Roads Organisation (BRO). —BMB

City in shock as electrocution cases rise

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

of a 37-year-old man in June 2013. A father and his daughter were killed in an electric transformer explosion in March 2022 at Manganahalli. A girl lost her right hand due to electrocution when she inadvertently came into contact with an electric wire close to the balcony of her house in June 2011. A mother and her infant daughter were killed in the latest incident that occurred near Hope Farm on Sunday morning.

However, the Bescom authorities remain apathetic to direct their staff to maintain the electric poles, wires, and cables properly.

The problem with the BBMP is that it is not able to replace defunct bulbs nor maintain the street light poles, and especially not the termination boxes. Most of the electric wires are protruding or without insulation thus posing a danger to

senior citizens, and especially children.

"It will be a great help and safe for unwary pedestrians if the BBMP ensures to provide covers to the termination boxes of each street light pole. It may not cost more to the BBMP either to insulate electric wires or provide covers to the termination boxes," said Murgesh N, a pedestrian.

The other problem is electric transformers placed on footpaths inconveniencing pedestrians nevertheless posing immense danger. Electric poles too are installed on the footpath at several locations in the city.

"We have relocated most of the electric transformers as per the court's direction. There may be one or two electric transformers that are yet to be relocated due to lack of space," said a Bescom official.

Meanwhile, BBMP superintendent engineer (electrical) Umadevi Baligar said the electric engineers are fixing the covers to the termination boxes of street lights.

"Most of the street light poles are old. These street light poles will be removed after installing new street light poles to convert sodium vapour bulbs into LEDs," said Baligar.

Health inspectors' wages unpaid for 6 months

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Another JHI who has been working for the past four years confirmed that the 215-odd JHIs working on contract basis indeed have not been paid. "As per the Labour Act, our salaries were increased from Rs 12,500 to Rs 24,500 during commissioner Randeep D's tenure.

We have been asking for a further salary increase but now no salaries have been credited for the past six months. For the 198 wards, there are 30 permanent JHIs alongside 215 JHIs provided by the outsourcing agency. With no regular income, we are now surviving by taking short-term loans and borrowing money from neighbours.

Neighbours will stop lending after the fifth month; we have medical and rental expenses. Even if the salaries are credited now, the bulk of the amount will go towards clearing pending expenses from previous months," said Rakesh*, a JHI.

BBMP clarified that the tender for the outsourcing agency expired in July and they had to further call tenders three times.

"We called the tender for assigning a new agency for outsourcing the work three times. It was only finalised the third time due to various technical reasons. The new agency will take over from December 1 and the old agency's contract was extended from July to November.

Previously, the work was awarded to Xeam Ventures associated with the BBMP for nearly three years. The pending salaries were expected to be cleared and will most likely be cleared by Monday" said a senior BBMP official.

That said, BBMP joint commissioner, SWM had informed BM on August 22, 2023, that issues were resolved and salaries would be credited within a few days.

(*name changed)

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CHANGE OF NAME

I, Purvi Chendur Sathisha/ Purvi Chendur D/o. Sathish Chendur Vasudeva Murthy Residing at No.12/1, 3rd Cross, 5th Main Road, N R Colony, Bengaluru-560004 have changed my name to PURVI SATHISH CHENDUR vide affidavit dated: 16.11.2023 Sworn before notary: K.S.Nataraja, Bangalore

I, Jyothi Archana Lalam, R/o 106, Aishwarya Residency Apartment, Sai baba temple road, munnekolala, Bangalore-560037 have changed my name as Jyothi Archana Kannuri.

I, Renu Ramohalli Srinivas, R/a: No.207, Edigara Area, Dodda Alada Marada, main Road, Ramohalli, Bengaluru-560060. I have changed my name to Raenu Ramohalli Srinivas. Vide affidavit dated-18.11.23. Sworn before notary H S Sakalesh Aradhya, Bengaluru.

I RIFAZ MASARRAT S/o Mohammed Ahmed Agha. R/o 351/3 30th cross road opposite Sri Garuda Swagath mall, TilakNagar, Jayanagar 4th block east, Bangalore 560041, have changed my name from MOHAMMED SAAD AGHA to RIFAZ MASARRAT for all future purposes

I, AMINABEE, R/o No.17, 2nd Cross, Hesaragatta Main Road, Rajiv Gandhi Nagara, Vidyaranyapura, Bangalore-560097, have changed my name to AMEENA BEE, vide affidavit dated 20/11/2023, sworn before notary Venkataramu H G, Bangalore.

I, ANJALI D/o. Awanish Kumar Singh, residing at SLV Essenza, near Jakkur Lake Road, Yelahanka, Bangalore-560064, have changed my name to ANJALI VARDAN SINGH, vide affidavit dated 03.11.2023, sworn before notary S.R Thulasikrishna, Bangalore.

I, ARPITHA J, Residing at No.19/A,19th Cross, KS Town, MTS Layout, Kengeri, Bengaluru, Karnataka – 560060, have changed my name to ARPITHA, vide affidavit dated 19/11/2023, sworn before notary Venkataramu H G, Bengaluru.

I Masheik Rahmani Ahamed Mydeem S/O, Ahamed Mydeem R/o No.9, E Block Bda Layout Lingarajapuram, St Thomas Town Bengaluru - 560084 have changed my name to Masheik Rahuman Ahamed Mydeem.

I, Atish Suresh Maragur R/o Premier Aratt Apts, E-118, Seetharamapalya, Whitefield, Bengaluru 560048 have changed my name to Atish Maragur Affidavit Dt.20/11/2023 notary Harisha G, B'luru

I Aysha Farheen M A D/O, Athaulla Khan Mohammedan Adam R/o M 302 Renaissance Exotica Jakkur Plantation,jakkur Bangalore 560064 Karnataka India. have changed my name to Aysha Farheen.

I Banobai Tafazzul Husain Ashiq R/o B906, Pariwar Pragathi Apartment, Bannergatta Road, Gottigere. Bengaluru 560083 have changed my name to Bano Bai Tafazzul Husain

I, KASTHURI GOVINDAN, W/o GOVINDAN C, R/o Flat No.T003, 3RD Floor, A Block Zed Enclave, Singasandra Bengaluru - 560068, Karnataka have changed my name as KASTHURI S, vide affidavit dated 18.11.2023, sworn before notary Y.V. Shankar, Bengaluru.

I, Roopesh Indel S/o Indel Sahani R/o No 76,kathriguppe Main Road, Banashankari 3rd Stage, Bengaluru 560085 have changed my name to Roopesh Indel Sahani For All Purposes.

LOST & FOUND

WE, SAVITHA & NAGARAJU Residing at No.144, Shambu lingeshwara Temple, Hulimavu, BG Road, Bengaluru, have lost original Sale Deeds Doc. No. 6070/14-15, BBMP Khata No. 292/292/259/367 and Doc. No. 6311/14-15, BBMP Khata No. 292/292/259/367 of No 58, 3rd cross, Janatha colony, Hulimavu BG Road Bangalore -560076 on 16.03.2021 at Hulimavu, BG Road, Bengaluru. We have given Police complaint in this regard on 06.11.2023 under lost report no. 0795837/2023. Complaint given by Ashok M. If found, contact on 9980104528

I, Venkata Raman Anantha Raman, R/o 306, LK Gloria Apt, 5th B Cross, Amruthahalli, Bengaluru-92 have changed my name to Venkata Raman

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HEALTH TIP: Beneficial bacteria play a protective role by decreasing the risk of diabetes development

Women who experience postmenopausal hot flashes can greatly benefit by following a vegan diet rich in fruits, vegetables, grains, and beans

BangaloreMirror | 9
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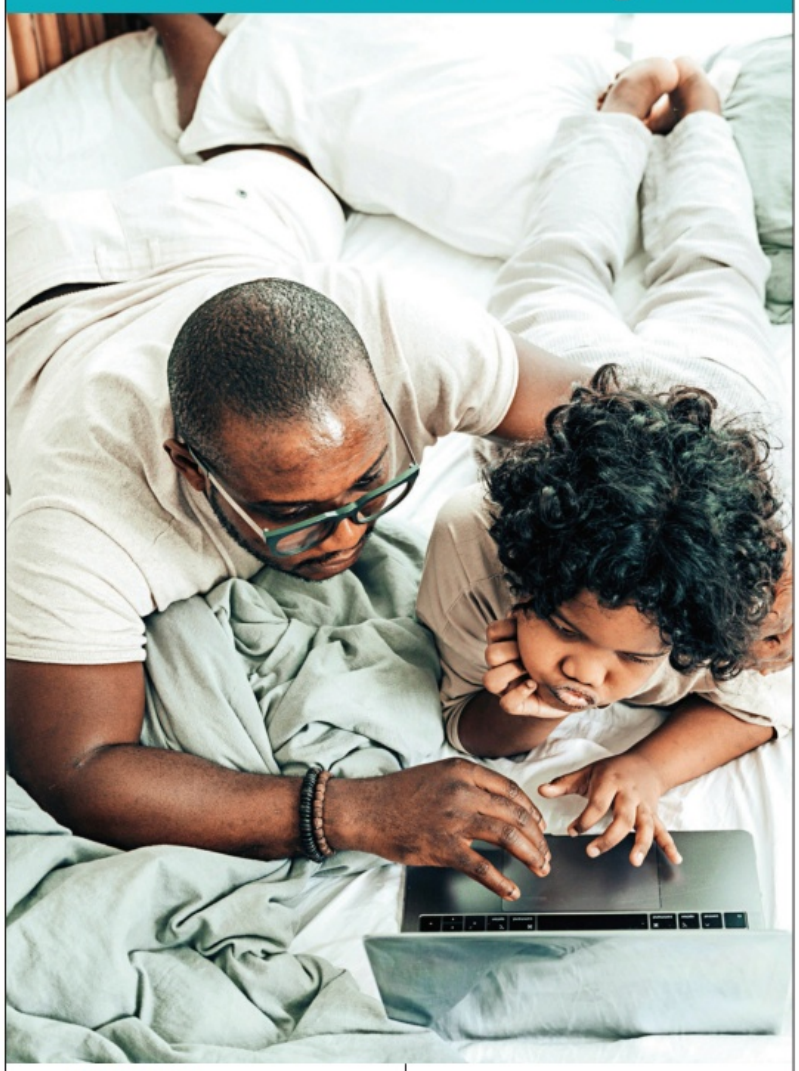
AI LESSONS

4 things parents should teach their kids about artificial intelligence



It is almost a year since ChatGPT burst onto the scene, fuelling great excitement as well as concern about what it might mean for education.

The changes keep coming. Earlier in the year, MyAI was embedded into social media platform Snapchat. This is a chatbot powered by ChatGPT, which encourages teens to ask anything - from gift suggestions for friends to questions about homework.

Meanwhile, Microsoft is rolling out "Copilot" on its systems, billed as an "everyday AI companion". This follows the introduction of "Bing Chat", an AI-enhanced assistant to accompany the Bing search tool.

All of a sudden, generative artificial intelligence – which can create new content such as text and images – has become accessible to everyone, including young people.

We are researchers with a background in digital technology and are highly enthusiastic about the potential for AI. However, there are risks as well as benefits. Here are three things parents can keep in mind as they navigate AI technology with their kids.

1 AI is here to stay

Artificial intelligence itself is not new – chatbots and generative AI have been around since the 1960s.

But over the past year there has been a rapid expansion in the size of AI databases, huge financial investments into these technologies, more innovative code, and enhanced accessibility and usability.

Parents may be naturally hesitant about AI. Many schools have considered banning some AI uses, amid claims it would lead to cheating and undermine academic integrity.

But AI is not going to go away, and will only become more widely used in our lives. The sooner young people learn to use this technology, the more informed they can be about how to use it wisely and productively.

If you are a parent, it is important to learn about and try these technologies for yourself so you can help your child navigate a world with AI. Start by logging in to a free generative AI tool, and experiment together by asking the bot some questions and reflecting on the answers.

2 Be critical

Generative AI can do amazing things – like generate images or write stories – but it does not reflect on what it's writing. It will string text together in a way that makes sense but not "read between the lines".

Generative AI cannot evaluate the credibility of sources, nor can it always find authoritative information to back up claims. The generative AI software is also trained on data from a specific time so recent events may not be included.

So children need to learn that although it looks similar to other writing, such as in a book or article, the text has been pieced together by computer code. This means every word, sentence and claim should be treated with scepticism.

You can use this as an opportunity to help your children develop critical thinking skills.

Go to a free AI art generator with your school-age child and put in some searches. Then ask your child questions such as, "What kinds of people are shown? What kinds are missing? Do you see any stereotypes? Can you see any biases?".

3 Watch out for chatbots

Chatbots are computer programs designed to simulate conversations as if they were another human.

For example, there were more than ten million Replika users as of 2022. Replika is a chatbot billed as a companion who cares. It acts like a friend but relationships with the chatbot can become romantic or sexual.

In many chatbot applications such as this, there may be no moderation or human checks on inappropriate content. So be aware if your child spending a long time with AI "friends".

If left unaccompanied, these types of applications could feed into a child's curiosity and potentially manipulate them into unethical and harmful situations, like highly personal conversations with a bot.

Make it clear to your children that generative AI is machine, not a human. It does not share your ideals, beliefs, culture or religion. It presents text and language based on models and algorithms. It is not something to argue with, take lessons from, or be used to reinforce your values.

The code may also be manually edited to inhibit certain viewpoints or stances on topics.

4 Images, videos and audio also matter

With all the focus on text, be sure to remind your children images and video are also part of the generative AI landscape. Children may be careful about what text they enter online but careless with uploading images.

Their photos and facial image become available to AI when uploaded, which makes it harder to protect their identity. For example, ChatGPT now has image capabilities you can include in your conversations with the chatbot. Discuss privacy with your child, and be sure to mention that any data uploaded to the internet can be stored, scanned and processed by AI.

AI can be a powerful learning and engagement tool, and the developments in this field are highly exciting. With open conversations and some oversight, the possibilities of children greatly benefiting from this technology are endless.

(By Kathy Mills, Australian Catholic University and Christian Moro, Bond University, The Conversation)

MIRRORLIGHTS

Nanoplastics promote conditions for Parkinson's, dementia: Study

Nanoplastics interact with a particular protein that is naturally found in the brain, creating changes linked to Parkinson's disease and some types of dementia, a study has found.

The research, published in the journal Science Advances, paves the way for a new area of investigation, fuelled by the timely impact of environmental factors on human biology.

"Parkinson's disease has been called the fastest growing neurological disorder in the world," said principal investigator, Andrew West, a professor at Duke University School of Medicine, US.

"Numerous lines of data suggest environmental factors might play a prominent role in Parkinson's disease, but such factors have for the most part not been identified," West said.

Improperly disposed plastics have been shown to break into very small pieces and accumulate in water and food supplies, and were found in the blood of most adults in a recent study.

"Our study suggests that the emergence of micro and nanoplastics in the environment might represent a new toxin challenge with respect to Parkinson's disease risk and progression," West said.

"This is especially concerning given the predicted increase in concentrations of these contaminants in our water and food supplies," the researcher added.

The team found that nanoparticles of the plastic polystyrene -- typically found in single use items such as disposable drinking cups and cutlery -- attract the accumulation of the protein known as alpha-synuclein. — PTI

All you need to know about...

Belly fat's brain link

Hidden risks
The development of Alzheimer's disease is associated with higher levels of visceral belly fat in midlife, according to research that will be presented next week at the annual conference of the Radiological Society of North America (RSNA). .

Alterations in the brain linked to belly fat
Fat around the internal organs located deep within the abdomen is called visceral fat.
This hidden belly fat has been linked by researchers to alterations in the brain that can develop up to 15 years before the first signs of Alzheimer's disease, such as memory loss..

Protein check
To try and identify Alzheimer's risks earlier, researchers assessed the association between brain MRI volumes, as well as amyloid and tau uptake on positron emission tomography (PET) scans, with body mass index (BMI), obesity, insulin resistance and abdominal adipose (fatty) tissue in a cognitively normal midlife population. Amyloid and tau are proteins thought to interfere with the communication between brain cells.

Increased burden of inflammation in brain
The researchers found that a higher visceral to subcutaneous fat ratio was associated with higher amyloid PET tracer uptake in the precuneus cortex, the region known to be affected early by amyloid pathology in Alzheimer's disease. This relationship was worse in men than in women. The researchers also found that higher visceral fat measurements are related to an increased burden of inflammation in the brain. Senior author Cyrus A. Raji, , associate professor of radiology and neurology, noted that the findings have several key implications for earlier diagnosis and intervention. —ANI

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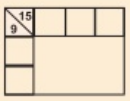
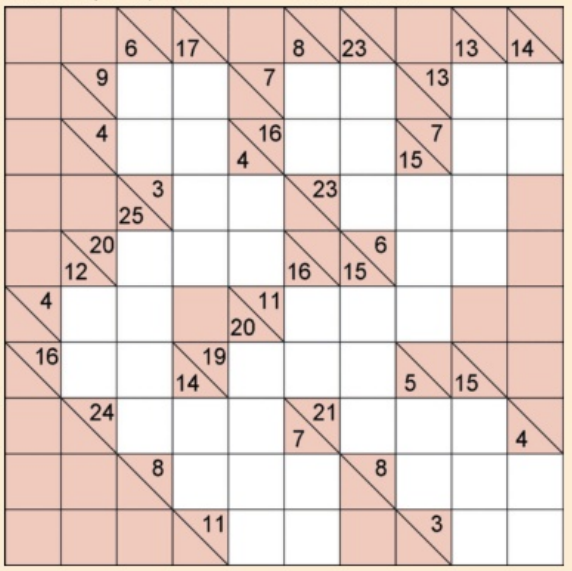
Kakuro

The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas

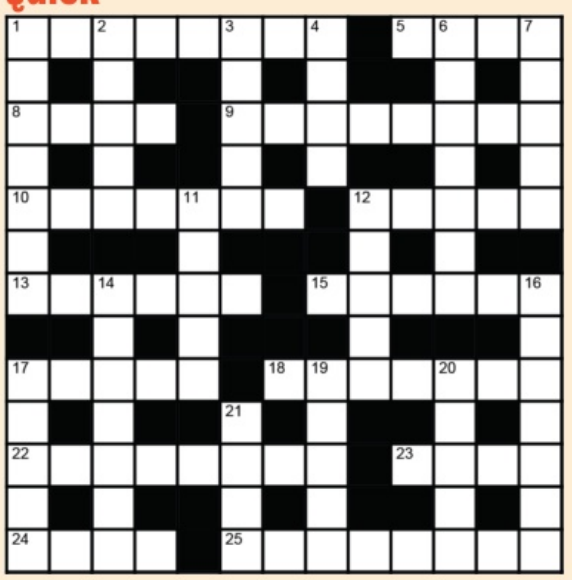


for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.

Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



Quick



ACROSS

1 Heeded, lent an ear? (8)
5 Poisonous snakes (4)
8 Stepped (4)
9 Covertly (2,6)
10 Turned down (7)
12 Deposit at bank (3,2)
13 Decline (4,2)
15 Playground items (6)
17 Bollywood lyricist ___ Akhtar (5)
18 Supplier of food (7)
22 Chapati made out of rice (4,4)
23 An increase in price (4)
24 To go on horseback (4)
25 Authors, creates or pens (8)

DOWN

1 Utters a series of oaths; swears (4,3)
2 Parody (5)
3 Unsophisticated (5)
4 Popular snack Masala ___ (4)
6 Wandered away (7)
7 Attended or took part as a visitor? (3,2)
11 Ten-armed mollusc (5)
12 Aircraft captain (5)
14 Cut, dismembered or separated (7)
16 Sieves; conceals (7)
17 A wild card (5)
19 Established principle (5)
20 Forays (5)
21 Kind of pear (4)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: S EQUALS I

VSZJGM XIBMSMOFJ SVG'M LJIC KOQR OVJ MW BGCWGJ.

Linemaro

Even if there were no gravity on Earth, I'd still fall for you!

Mindchow

Success is a lousy teacher. It seduces smart people into thinking they can't lose.

Joke of the day

A soldier who survived mustard gas and pepper spray is now a seasoned veteran.

Loop

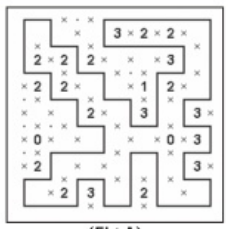
Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.

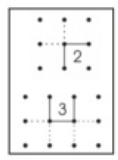
How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

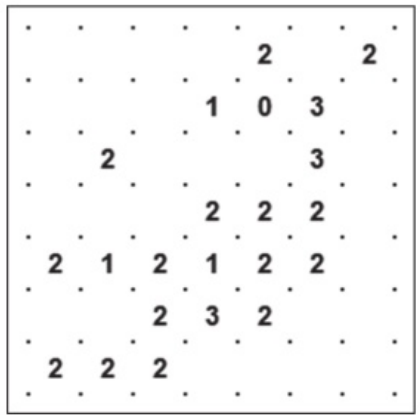
Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)



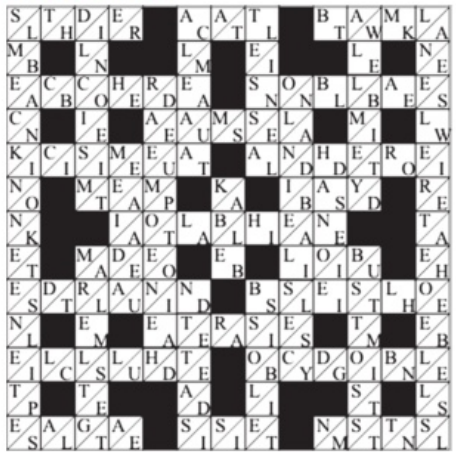
(Fig A)



(Fig B) Not Allowed



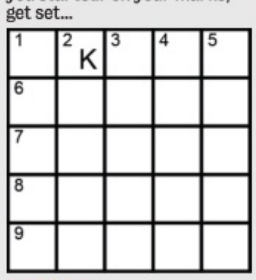
Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...



ACROSS

1 Beard; 6 Vogues;
7 Atango; 8 Medeg;
9 Tords

DOWN

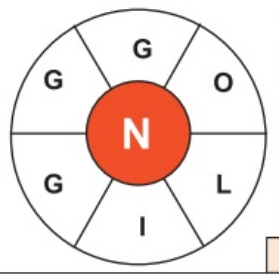
1 Ai tes; 2 Eak ju;
3 Bogue; 4 Parest;
5 Bases

Mensapuzzle

What number should replace the question mark?

1, 3, 4, 7, 11, 18, 29, ?

Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

06 Average; 07 Good; 09 Outstanding

SudokuChallenge

4		1	8		2	9		7
		6	3		9	4		
	4			8			9	
9			6		4			3
	5			2			6	
		4	1		8	3		
8		3	5		7	6		9

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.

Easy = 7
3 6 7 9

Medium = 48
5 8 8 9

Hard = 4
6 8 9 8

Hocusfocus

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

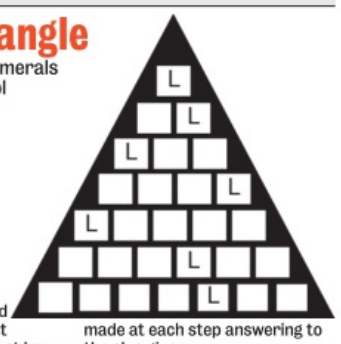
Differences: 1. Cable box cord is missing. 2. Doorway is wider. 3. Lampshade is smaller. 4. Back of chair is different. 5. Shoes are different. 6. Chair cushion is thicker.

Riddler

What is the next number in the series: 139,089; 12,644; 1,149; 104?

Alpha triangle

1 Fifty in Roman numerals
2 Aluminium symbol
3 Young fellow
4 Transaction
5 Put on cargo
6 Confounded
7 Used an oar



Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE

COMICS

Redeye by Mel Casson

MEET MY NEW ASSISTANT. WE'RE GOING TO DRIVE AWAY EVIL SPIRITS
12-27
IF SHE CAN DO AS WELL AS SHE DID MAKING HER MASK, WE'VE GOT IT MADE!
I COULD'VE SWORN SHE WAS WEARING A MASK!
MEL CASSON

Bizarrotrip

I'm not touching that. It's gross.
Me neither. I'm wearing new scrubs.
Don't look at me. I hate slimy stuff.
Oooh. I just saw it wiggle.
BIZARRO.COM
Facebook.com/BizarroComics
12·13·17

Diamond Lil

Hart of the city

HEART! I TALKED TO THE GUY RUNNING THE PLAY AND HE SAID I COULD BE ON THE LIGHTING CREW!
YOU ARE LOOKING AT AN OFFICIAL SPOTLIGHT OPERATOR.
SPOTLIGHT?! YOU'RE IN CHARGE OF A SPOTLIGHT FOR THE SHOW?!
NOT EXACTLY "IN CHARGE"...
DEAN! BUDDY! PAL! IT JUST SO HAPPENS I HAVE TONS OF SPOTLIGHT IDEAS... ESPECIALLY IN MY SCENES!

Crankshaft

WE COULD RE-GIFT LENA'S CHRISTMAS COOKIES AND GIVE THEM OUT TO THE KIDS ON OUR BUS.
NO... YOU DON'T WANT TO DO THAT!
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN HOW THEY WEAPONIZED THEM LAST YEAR?
BATTLE & AYERS

Mutts

WHAT YOUR STARS SAY TODAY

Aries Mar 21 – Apr 20
Today, you may feel dissatisfaction; you may not be able to take on your responsibilities. Your investments may cause you some losses. You are advised to read documents carefully before putting your signature on them. Parents' health may make you upset. You may plan to reconstruct your office; it is advised to postpone renovation for some days.

Taurus Apr 21 – May 20
Today, you may plan to migrate from your current place to another place. It is advised to think twice before taking decisions regarding migration or a change of place. You may also plan to change jobs. There will be peace in the mind. But your kids' health might make you upset. It is advised to avoid speculation in investments. Love birds shall keep patience before taking an important decision.

Gemini May 21 – Jun 21
Today, you may have good patience. Meditation may help you increase your concentration, which may help speed up your project. Your subordinates may cooperate with you, which may help you complete the project before the deadline. You are likely to go on some short trips related to work. An influential person may help you boost your network.

Cancer Jun 22 – July 23
Today, you may be busy with family get-togethers and social events. You may become polite with the people around you, which may increase your prestige among them. You may spend money on buying some artefacts or household stuff, which may improve your social status. You are likely to hear some good news from one of your relatives.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23
Today you may be happy and blessed by the moon; you may feel healthy, which may reflect in your way of working. You may perform well in all areas of your life, which may improve your prestige. Your concentration may be very good today, but you may make some difficult decisions in your business in terms of growth.

Virgo Aug 24 – Sep 23
Today, your vital power may slow down, and your old disease may reappear, which may make you upset. You are advised to avoid adventure tours or rash driving. You are advised to avoid any type of ligation; you may settle it out of the jury. You may also plan an overseas tour.

Libra Sep 24 – Oct 22
Today, you may start your day with happiness. At work, you may make quick decisions, which may increase your management skills and have benefits in the near future. You may expect some new source of income, which may boost your savings. With the help of your business partner, you may invest some money in the business. Your bonding with the spouse may be increased.

Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 22
Today, you may be busy at your office. Due to mental tiredness, you may not be able to give time to your family. With the help of the elder's blessings, job seekers may get a high position in the job, and managers may get promoted to top management. You may get rewards, which may increase your status. Professionally, you may do better.

Sagittarius Nov 23 – Dec 22
Today you may feel some positive vibrations around you, which may show you the right path. With the help of peace in mind, your performance on every front may be noticeable. Your destiny is with you. You may plan to visit a religious place that is somehow far from your territory. Your inner senses may ask you to do some charity. You may also hear some good news in terms of grandchildren.

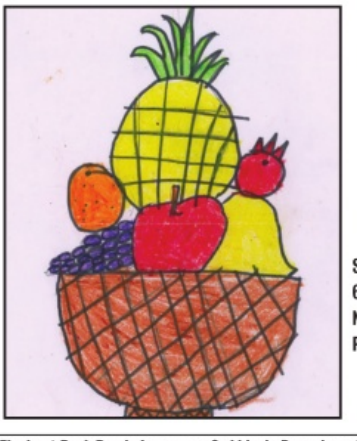
Capricorn Dec 23 – Jan 20
Today, you may feel some internal weakness. Some major health issues may reoccur. You may not be able to enjoy it on a domestic and professional front. Running projects may stop unexpectedly, which may make you upset. You are advised to drive safely. The elder's blessing may help you come out of the messy situation.

Aquarius Jan 21 – Feb 19
Today, you may feel positive vibrations around you. Things are under control. You may plan to start a new business as a partnership. You may expect some long-distance travel as well. You will have faith in your spouse, which will bring harmony to your domestic life.

Pisces Feb 20 – Mar 20
Today is a good day for you. Investors may make good gains in their investments, which may boost their financial health. Money that was stuck may be recovered, which may increase liquidity in the business. You may become confident and gain control over hidden enemies and opponents. Singles are likely to find their match in the same field or workplace.

KIDZONE

Krisha Mahesh, 10 years, Little Flower Public School



Soumili Day, 6 years, New Horizon Public School

Kidzone, Bangalore Mirror, No. 74/2, Sanjana Plaza, 4th & 5th Floor, Elephant Rock Road, Jayanagar 3rd block, Bengaluru-560 011; Please send hard copies of your artwork in A4 size only.

SOLUTIONS

SOLVE IN 1M

$\frac{(0.25)^{0.5}}{\frac{0.25}{0.5}} = x\%$

$\frac{0.5}{0.5^{0.5}} = x\%$

$(0.5)^2 = x\%$

$0.25 = x\%$

$x = 25\%$

BULL'S EYE
going, gone, ling, lingo, lion, LOGGING, loin, long, ogling

FAST FIVE

T	I	E	R	S
C	H	O	S	E
T	A	U	P	E
	E	D	G	E	D
O	K	R	A	S

STRIKE OUT

S	A	T	E		S	S	E		M	T	N	U		
P		E		D		L		S		L				
A	C	C	E	D	E		N	O	B	L	E	S		
C		E	A	S	E	L		I		W				
K	I	S	M	E	T		A	D	H	E	R	E		
	M		E	R	I	E		M		B				
S	T	R	A	N	D		B	L	I	T	H	E		
	E		A	D	O		B		I	O	U		H	
N		I	T	A	L	I	A	N		T				
O		T	A	P		A		B	A	D		R		
	I		I		O				I		E			
R	E	F	U	S	E	D		P	A	Y	I	N		
S		O		V		A		A		I				
T	R	O	D		I	N	S	E	C	R	E	T		
A		P		A		O		T		A				
L	I	S	T	E	N	E	D		A	S	P	S		

QUICK

R	I	D	E		C	O	M	P	O	S	E	S		
E		E		S		O		D		N				
O		E		B		X		A		E				
J	A	V	E	D		C	A	T	E	R	E	R		
	E		I		O						C			
3	5	7	9	2	1	8	6	4						
9	1	8	6	5	4	2	7	3						
6	4	2	7	8	3	5	9	1						
5	7	6	3	1	9	4	8	2						
2	8	9	4	7	5	1	3	6						
4	3	1	8	6	2	9	5	7						

SUDOKU

8	2	3	5	4	7	6	1	9
1	9	5	2	3	6	7	4	8
7	6	4	1	9	8	3	2	5
3	5	7	9	2	1	8	6	4
9	1	8	6	5	4	2	7	3
6	4	2	7	8	3	5	9	1
5	7	6	3	1	9	4	8	2
2	8	9	4	7	5	1	3	6
4	3	1	8	6	2	9	5	7

MENSA PUZZLE
47: each number is the sum of the previous two numbers i.e. 18 + 29 = 47

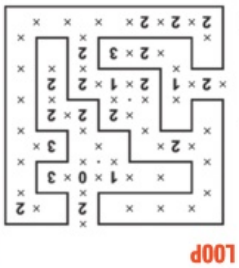
RIDDLER 9 (-5, /11)

QUOTE UNCODE
Silent gratitude isn't very much use to anyone.

GO FIGURE
Easy
9 + 7 − 6 − 3 = 7
Medium
9 + 5 − 8 × 8 = 48
Hard
9 × 8 / 6 − 8 = 4

ALPHA TRIANGLE
L, Al, Lad, Deal, Ladle, Addled, Paddled.

LOOP



KAKURO

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Stepped away— Actress Gwyneth Paltrow has revealed how motherhood impacted her career. The actress shared that she hasn't been in an entire movie since her 19-year-old daughter Apple was born

SISTER ACT

Nupur on pros and cons of having a successful elder sister in the industry

She began her journey in showbiz with music videos, post which she was seen in a web film Pop Kaun? She made her debut in south cinema with Tiger Nageswara Rao and is awaiting the release of her Hindi film Noorani Chehra. Like sister Kriti, Nupur Sanon too turned to acting and is having her own journey. Having a successful elder sister by her side has of course benefited her, but then there are some adverse effects to it too.

Nupur shares, "It is always great to have someone who can guide you in an industry you are new to. It helped me understand the world of showbiz, which was very different from where I come. So, I did receive help in knowing how somebody is and whom one can talk to. Having said that, there are pros and cons to having a sister in the same industry."

> "It is great to have someone to guide you in an industry you are new to. It helped me understand the world of showbiz

She continues, "When I say cons, yes, it becomes a lot harder to make your individual name, when there is someone in your own family, who shares the same surname and has achieved a lot more and is at a bigger stature than you. Like, if I would have made a digital debut with Pop Kaun? as someone else and not a Sanon then people would have seen me differently. But now it is all about, 'oh that had Kriti's sister in it'. It becomes harder to register your first name."

Nupur's taking things in her stride by making choices that are very different from her sister's and she signs off saying, "Making a debut in showbiz with a music video was a conscious choice, because I want to have my identity, which is separate from hers and that will only happen with my separate choices and individual thought process." **— ETimes**

SANDALWOOD SHOTS

Y MAHESWARA REDDY

Ready for release

Much-awaited and delayed Kannada movie Mayanagari is all set to hit the silver screen shortly. The movie was initially titled Nagarakatte but the director changed the title to Mayanagari after completing the shoot. The movie's peppy song – Lachi Lachi - was released by five-year-old Baby Nishitha during a function on Saturday.

"The shoot of the movie began more than six years ago. Post-production work was delayed due to the lockdown. It took more than a year to complete the CG work. I appreciate Anish Tejeshwar for his patience and dedication," said director Shankar Aradhya.

Mayanagari is the Aradhya's second film as a director after 18th Cross more than a decade ago. "The song will be a trump card for this movie," the director said, adding that the movie is based on real incidents in Bengaluru.

Unique title

Pratham aka Olle Huduga Pratham, who was in the limelight after winning Bigg Boss Kannada Season 4 and donating the prize money to the needy, is all set to play the lead in a Kannada movie. The title of the movie is First Night with Devva. Pratham has also written the script for the movie. Its muhurat function was held at Bande Mahankalamma Temple on Saturday and veteran actor Srinivasamurthy sounded the clap board.

"The story is inspired by the tale of Vikram Bethal. I selected the film's title. It is an out and out comedy and will entertain the audiences. My friend Naveen is bankrolling this movie," said Pratham. First Night with Devva is PVR Swamy's fourth film as a director. "The script of First Night with Devva is very interesting. I am sure it will become a huge success. The shooting of the movie, except for one song, will be held in Bengaluru for around 30 days. We want to go abroad to shoot the song. I am also the cinematographer in this film," said Swamy.

Srinivasamurthy, Nikitha, Sangeetha, Harish Raj, Thanuja, and Manya Singh are the cast of this movie.

Judge and jury

Actress Radhika Madan attended the Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival (TBNFF) as a juror recently and remarked that her whole perspective had changed on films as she was now the one who was judging.

Thankful for the opportunity of being able to attend the prestigious affair, Radhika penned a heartfelt note, expressing her gratitude to the jury, the organisers, and reflected on her own personal growth. Expressing her appreciation for the platform that allowed her to celebrate, the actress penned a note on her Instagram, and wrote: "The perfect end to the most amazing 12 days of my life! Watching more than 16 films, meeting some phenomenal individuals and creating a lifetime of memories. I was here last year with Sanaa, I know how it feels to be on the other side with the anticipation and anxiety and now being on this side, as a Jury member I realised how limited my view was last year."**—IANS**

Twinkle to DP defence

Actress Twinkle Khanna has offered support to Deepika Padukone amid criticism following Padukone's candid revelations about her personal life on the talk show 'Koffee with Karan'. During the show, Padukone shared details about their marriage, including their initial dating phase with Ranveer, when they seemingly dated others.

Twinkle Khanna expressed admiration for Deepika Padukone, highlighting that Padukone didn't succumb to societal expectations by not immediately committing to the first interested suitor.

Instead, DP chose to explore relationships with other men while simultaneously being involved with her eventual husband.

Twinkle Khanna expressed bewilderment at the online trolling Deepika Padukone faced due to her candid revelations. Twinkle mentioned an incident where students at Banaras Hindu University enacted a play, depicting a girl portraying Deepika and male students acting as her past boyfriends. She defended Deepika's logical approach to finding a suitable partner, likening it to choosing a couch, where one checks if it feels nice or not or has a good back rest or not etc. **— ETimes**